

**Ravalli County Planning Board**  
**Meeting Minutes for April 18, 2006**  
**3:00 p.m.**  
**Commissioners Meeting Room, 215 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Hamilton, Montana**

**Public Meeting**  
Update and Discussion on the Countywide Zoning Project

*This is a summary of the meeting, not a verbatim transcript. A CD of the meeting may be purchased from the Planning Department for \$5.00.*

**1. Call to order**

**Chip** called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

**2. Roll Call** (See Attachment A, Roll Call Sheet)

(A) Members

Mary Lee Bailey (absent – excused)  
Dale Brown (present)  
Phil Connelly (present)  
Ben Hillicoss (present)  
Dan Huls (present)  
JR Iman (absent – excused)  
Lee Kierig (present)  
Maura Murray (present)  
Chip Pigman (present)  
Les Rutledge (present)

Park Board Representative: Bob Cron (present)

(B) Staff

Jennifer De Groot  
Karen Hughes  
John Lavey  
Shaun Morrell  
Vanessa Perry  
Laura Robinson  
Renee Van Hoven

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Chip** asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes from March 21, 2007. He noted there was a spelling error on Page 9. The minutes were approved as corrected.

**4. Amendments to the Agenda**

There were none.

## 5. Public Comment

The Board agreed to hear public comments from the audience before beginning the main discussion on zoning.

**Marilyn Burton** stated that she and her neighbors are concerned about a sawmill operation going in above Donaldson's between Bowman Road and Orchard Drive.

**Karen** encouraged her to fill out a complaint form with the Planning Department.

## 6. Correspondence

There was none.

## 7. Update and Discussion about the Countywide Zoning Project

### (A) Countywide Zoning Project Progress Report

#### (i) Updated work plan

**Karen** went over the updated work plan (See Attachment B, Progress Report to Planning Board dated April 12, 2007 and Attachment C, Countywide Zoning Work Plan updated April 17, 2007). She noted that the County is overall meeting the timeline. She noted that the initial phases of the project involved developing the work plan and public involvement plan. Once that was underway, the plan was to flesh out the process for each Community Planning Committees (CPC) and the Land Capability and Suitability Analysis.

#### (ii) Public involvement plan

**Karen** noted the Board received updated drafts of the Public Involvement Plan. (See Attachment D, Ravalli County Public Involvement Plan Draft updated April 13, 2007) Ideally, a draft of this plan would be done by late spring. She noted that there are key pieces in the plan that require oversight from the Board and the BCC. She noted that Staff needs to finish the document and buff out the CPC roles. (See Attachment E, Community Planning Committee Reference Manual – Draft, March 2007) Staff is currently working with the Public Policy and Research Institute to receive an assessment of the plan by interviewing key members of the community.

#### (iii) Regulatory framework

**Karen** explained that this was not yet complete, but she hopes to finish the draft and get it to the Land Use Subcommittee soon.

#### (iv) Land capability and suitability analysis

**Karen** noted that Staff is well underway in this area. A request for proposals was issued and a consultant was selected to advise the GIS modeling. Staff has developed a list of existing data and a draft methodology. Staff also started a list of technical and agency advisers that will weigh in via email. She noted that the Department is finishing up a Community Development Block Grant application to

obtain money for the data part of the project. She noted that planning grants would be used to update the Growth Policy and implement it via zoning. She noted that work has not yet started on the zoning map or formal process.

(v) Additional financial resources

**Karen** noted that Staff is working on the Department's budget for the coming fiscal year and their budget hearing will be on May 7. Jim Owens from the Brainerd Foundation visited last week and met with many groups in the county.

(B) Discussion Topics

(i) Perceived Successes and Challenges to date with the Countywide Zoning Project

**Vanessa** asked the Board to list two or three challenges and successes they have seen thus far during the countywide zoning project. She assigned half of the Board to discuss the challenges and how to overcome them. The other half was assigned to report on successes and how to assure they continue.

**Ben** reported the challenges fell into the following main categories:

- Planning & Scheduling - meeting timelines and premature meeting of CPC groups
- CPC Creation and Development - reaching as many people as possible, reaching decisions, and keeping the groups engaged
- Training - training the public, finding data, and overcoming the learning curve
- Finding financial and time resources
- Staffing - providing training to staff and their assistance at CPC meetings
- Perception - proper expectations of the public, misinformation, and bad press
- Misc. - reaching compromises and conveying the true value of agricultural land

**Ben** said that hopefully the role of the CPCs will be better defined after today's meeting, but noted that there will be challenges in trying to coordinate the groups. He described what he had been doing with the Florence CPC.

**Chip** cautioned that the County runs the risk of allowing a group of enthusiastic people get ahead of a developed process. He noted that the groups will take Staff time and resources.

**Lee** asked what the committees were supposed to do and suggested visioning exercises.

**Karen** said that the idea at the initial meetings was to introduce the idea of committees, not have them do anything. She wanted the Board and the BCC to be comfortable with CPC processes and functions before they started meeting. The goal is for the next round of meetings to explain CPCs. She said that their first role will be to obtain and process information about zoning. They are not scheduled to make the zoning maps until fall.

**Chip** asked how to communicate to the public that the County is not really ready at this stage to have the CPCs meet.

**Ben** said that at the last meeting in Florence, half of the time was spent answering general questions and the other half was spent looking through the CPC Reference Manual. They also assigned out roles. He said that he asked them not to schedule another meeting, but they were anxious and scheduled another one in two weeks.

**Phil** noted that no one has finalized what the CPCs are expected to do. He was concerned that this group will have certain expectations about their role that might not mesh up with the finalized expectations.

**Ben** said that the objective of CPCs is to meet with landowners and draw circles on the map. He explained that the Florence CPC knows the BCC makes the final decision.

**Phil** noted that something in the Community Calendar of the Ravalli Republic said that the Florence group citizens will dictate what the zoning maps look like.

**Chip** noted that another challenge is dissemination of information.

**Les** noted that the BCC advised the Board and Planning Department last fall that the north valley would be the pilot group for what we would be doing. He contended that input from Florence will help other districts. He said that other district meetings need to be underway before we can move ahead with Florence.

**Phil** replied that a pilot group should not start before we are ready. He noted that if the County cannot keep up with a group that started, their enthusiasm will wane and they will lose interest.

**Bob** noted that the county is only a couple weeks from the next round of meetings. After that time, the challenge will be keeping up with all of them.

**Jim Rokosch** said he has been working with the Lone Rock Citizens for Responsible Growth and is trying to be patient. Some citizens in Lone Rock have been meeting regularly and talking about the community they want to see out of the process. He noted that many people in Lone Rock are frustrated that there is not enough progress yet. He noted that the Florence community has been meeting and appears to be enthusiastic about the process.

**Lee** suggested that the groups spend this interim time learning about land use planning concepts.

**Dale** suggested combining the Stevensville, Florence, and Lone Rock districts because of their proximity.

**Jim Rokosch** suggested that adjacent planning districts need to communicate due to boundary issues and common themes, but noted that planning districts represent unique districts. He suggested that the CPCs revisit the Growth Policy and tools document and work on neighborhood visioning.

**Paul Weese** hypothesized that after the Nuts & Bolts meetings, the CPCs will need to assimilate a great deal of information, which will slow them down. During that time, the Planning Board and Planning Department can jump ahead of them.

**Bob** reported on three main successes of the countywide zoning project.

- The County has done a good job of engaging public in the beginning of the process. Challenges include keeping up with the timeline and scheduling the next round of meetings.
- Staff and Boards have done a good job of coming along on documents. Staff spent a lot of time and is pretty much on schedule for preparing them. The challenge is to get things ready to move ahead.
- The Planning Department seems to be on schedule preparing things. He suggested finishing off documents and making them dynamic, with the ability to adjust as needed.

(ii) Nuts & Bolts Meetings (2<sup>nd</sup> round of meetings)

(a) Proposal

**John** stated that today's goal is to nail down the Nuts & Bolts meetings agenda. At the end of the meetings, people would coordinate a time and place to meet and begin the CPC 102 meetings. The goal is to start the Nuts & Bolts meetings by the end of April or early May.

(b) Planning Board reaction to the Proposal

**Bob** requested a simplified purpose of the meetings, which should be an overview of the zoning process and draft zoning regulations and to facilitate formation of the CPCs.

**Ben** agreed with Bob and suggested that the County stop asking what the public wants us to do and instead gather reactions to a plan.

**Les** assumed a Staff member would do the presentation. He suggested a discussion-format instead of a PowerPoint presentation due to the level of detail.

**Ben** noted that the public process is good, but messy. He agreed that people should be able to comment.

**Rick Fuhrman** asked how long Staff expected the meeting to last.

**John** said the ideal length is within two hours. He said that it might be appropriate to have a PowerPoint presentation in the beginning and a group discussion at the end. He said it could be done in one night meeting.

**Bob** thought it the presentation should be shorter than 40 minutes.

**Rick Fuhrman** agreed that the purpose/goals should be shorter. He stated that the intention of working groups is to develop information necessary for creating a map for BCC approval at the end. He thought the purpose should

be explicit and the group should receive a draft of zoning regulations at this meeting. He recommended that the Planning Department bring existing maps with Ravalli County information on it so the groups could get familiar with their district.

**John** said he intends to have the maps available at the meetings.

The Board discussed what information should be included on the maps and **John** noted that a list is available on Page 22 of the Public Involvement Plan. Suggestions for the maps included showing the density of each district and showing a layer of approved subdivision plats.

**Chip** asked if Staff feels they run the risk of including too much information on the maps. **Shaun** anticipated a few synthesized maps would be provided at the meetings. **Karen** noted that Staff is still gathering data and later on can provide more sophisticated maps. **Bob** anticipated only two maps would be necessary. **Ben** suggested presenting the maps on a smart board. He noted that the Florence School District has one available. **Dan** noted that a map he obtained recently did not show all of the orchard tracts because it was mapped by ownership instead of individual lots.

**Maura** left the meeting.

**Chip** suggested that density and actual lots will give most people what they want. **Ben** suggested showing a portion of Missoula County on the maps as well. **Karen** said Staff is working on obtaining that information.

**Bob** suggested listing the primary role of the CPCs as the first item under the Role of CPCs on the Nuts & Bolts agenda. He also suggested making the criteria for CPC members the same. He noted that the agenda needs to identify further participants with the next meeting time, date, and place.

**Phil** asked if Staff anticipates CPCs making changes to the zoning regulations.

The Board generally agreed that the zoning regulations would be presented as drafts so that the CPCs and others could recommend changes, but the intent is not for the CPCs to overhaul the proposed zoning regulations.

**Curtis Cook** said that the last election was a vote of non-confidence for the BCC, Planning Board, and Planning Department. He did not think that people would react positively if they were presented with an almost-finished draft of zoning regulations.

**Chip** said that the Board will send out the draft, educate the CPCs, and take public comment on the draft, but it should not be the primary focus of this process.

**Rick Furhman** asked if the same facilitator would work with the group throughout the process because it allows continuity and efficiency.

**John** said that a facilitator should be present at each Nuts & Bolts meeting. He noted that it is too early to tell whether it would be the same facilitator, but recognized that for the sake of CPCs, the same facilitator could provide a desired continuity.

(iii) Community Planning Committees (CPCs)

(a) Presentation by staff on current plan for CPCs

**Karen** said that Staff envisioned CPCs to be created in each school district, but after meeting with Sula residents, realized there may be a need to create additional planning committees. She said that each CPC would consist of a general interest group and a core group that would make decisions. She noted that Staff is seeking input on the roles of the CPCs and early things the groups can do to move forward without getting ahead of Staff. Staff is also seeking input on the relationship between the CPCs, Planning Board, Planning Department, and BCC. She asked what financial and staffing resources the CPCs will need.

**Dale** left the meeting.

(b) Board Discussion on CPCs

The Board discussed at length about how the CPCs will be selected. Although some Board members opted for the self-selection method, the Board agreed on the hybrid method because it could offer broad representation, criteria, and an opportunity to remove someone who is disrupting the process. They noted that if there is not an entity represented in the core CPC, it is up to the CPC to gather input from that group. They agreed to rephrase Section 3.2.6 of the Public Involvement Plan to read: “or if petitioned by citizens at large.”

**Ben** asked if interested citizens or landowners who do not have voting privileges in the County can be involved in the CPCs.

**Chip** noted that zoning pertains to land and hoped that the process would engage the landowners instead of allowing special interest groups to hijack the process. He said voting rights need to be established upfront.

**Ben** reiterated an email he sent to the Board. (See Attachment F, Email entitled “Lets Develop a ‘Grand Plan’ for the Bitterroot Valley”) His suggestion included having a charrette at the beginning of the Land Capability and Suitability Analysis that would identify what major landmarks the county wants and does not want in the foreseeable future, including airports, major parks, and universities. He suggested including several really good architects, university people, and major design groups like WGM. He noted that although this type of zoning is slated for Phase II, it makes sense to identify the large landmarks now instead of changing the zoning between Phases I and II.

**Jim Rokosch** suggested taking an inventory of what we have to determine what we want.

**Les** disagreed with Ben's approach and said long-range planning for zoning should not be discussed now. He suggested that the Board review Ben's email and bring it up at a later meeting.

**Lee** suggested finding out how many people we think are going to live in the County because that relates to public health and safety issues.

In response to how the Board should relate to CPCs, it agreed that the Planning Board members will offer oversight to the CPCs, but not take on leadership positions. They agreed to be educated on the issues enough to answer questions and act in advisory roles.

The Board agreed that ideally, there should be the same Staff member and facilitator at every CPC meeting, but that may not be feasible. They did request that the same Staff member attend meetings and relay communication to establish continuity.

**Karen** noted that she hopes to have an updated zoning budget soon to address these issues.

**Jim Rokosch** suggested having a planner and facilitator early in the process, but noted that the need for a facilitator may wane later on. He said that the need for Staff or a facilitator can be established by the agenda.

**Bob** offered his expertise in parks planning to every district.

**Dave Schultz** suggested that there should be no surprises when the final drafts come before the Board. He recommended having a Planning Board member and a Planning Staff member present at every CPC meeting.

The Board suggested that the BCC's role could be to provide funding and participate in their area, but not assume a leadership role. They need to be involved enough to be comfortable with the outcomes of the group and feel confident in the CPCs.

## 8. Communications from Staff

### (A) Surprise Agenda Item

**Karen** asked the Planning Board members to imagine that they had an additional \$100,000 to \$200,000 to put toward the countywide zoning project. She said that she is getting positive feedback from the Brainerd Foundation and other individuals willing to match funds and wants ideas of how to spend the money if we receive it. (Staff hung posters with spending options in four categories.) She asked the Board to label their top two choices in each category. Top Board results are as follows with Staff choices also noted by an asterisk. Options without a number were only identified by Staff.

#### *Public Engagement*

1. Trained facilitators and/or staff at CPC meetings with needed resources\*
2. Zoning felt board map – using felt on felt to “build” a zoning map for the county
  - Opinion survey\*



*Project Management and Other Enhancements*

1. Preparations for administration of zoning so we are ready when zoning is in place\*
2. Start planning for Phase II
  - Full/part time project manager (and possibly other additional staff with specialized training) from outside the Planning Department\*

*Data and Technology*

1. Build-out demonstration showing what different development densities with various amenities are like using examples from communities in the valley\*
2. Data/research to fill in water quality/quantity information\*

*Communications*

1. Fancy website with ability to take public comments
2. Frequent mailings\* (tie)
2. Development of "Welcome to the Valley Guide" with regs and neighborly tips (tie)
  - Workshops/constructive activities with cities, school boards, etc. to build trust and find common goals\*

(B) Fiscal Year 07-08 budget initial overview and timeline

**Karen** asked if the executive committee of the Planning Board would be available to give feedback on the Planning Department's budget via email.

**Chip** answered that they would.

9. **Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: May 2, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.**

(A) Planning Board review of Planning Department Budget Proposal

10. **Adjournment**

**Chip** adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.